THE PORT FOLIO.

ENLARGED.

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

.....“VARIOUS, THAT THE MIND
OF DESULTORY MAN, STUDIOUS OF CHANGE,
AND PLEAS'D WITH NOVELTY, MAY BE INDULGED.”
COWPER.

VOL. III.] [No. 50.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1803.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

THE LAY PREACHER.

“ One thing is needful.”

PERHAPS some of my partial readers thought so lately, when they cut open the leaves of the Port Folio, and sought in vain for a Sermon. What can induce the Lay Preacher to be careless of his flock? was the general exclamation. Various were the conjectures concerning the omission of my duty; and some of them resembled the pleasantry of the Prophet, that I was either talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or, peradventure, sleeping, and would not be awaked. My vanity being thus flattered by the inquiries and anxiety of my friends, I will frankly inform them, that, during the last fortnight, I have read two of the canonical books of Scripture, many sublime passages in Paradise Lost, three admirable discourses, by an exemplary prelate, a religious tract, a pastoral letter, divers of the moral papers of ADDISON, and a leaf or two in the volume of the human heart. But, *one thing was needful.* My head was clouded by the fog of spleen, my heart was corroded by the canker of care, my hands were slack to labour, and the Spirit of Invention had fled away. I, therefore, dismissed my duty, as Felix dismissed the accused apostle, to a more convenient season, devoted the vacant hours to ease, strove, as David advises, to mingle merriment and Psalm singing, and attempted, with treackle and philosophy, to compose my cough, and my cares.

Although most modern authors, and some clergymen, choose to write without thinking, I am so whimsical as to be positive it is the one thing needful. I shall never preach without, at least, two or three ideas in my mind; and, as I live sequestered from the crowd, am denied a visit to the Vatican, see but few faces, and was never remarkable for an exuberance of fancy, my readers must not be surprised, if I borrow a lesson from rural economy, and husband my head as a judicious farmer spares the leaner soil, who is satisfied even with its penurious produce at one season, and is willing it should remain *fallow* at another. The little stock of invention, or information, of which I am the owner, is very much at the world's service; and when I can impart the new or the useful, I will do it cheerfully, and put my little papers in the Port Folio, as a punctual merchant his letters in the Post Office. But, when I am sick, or stupid, I am resolved not to repeat myself, or quote from other men, merely for the sake of scribbling. I am a worshipper of originality. Always in literature, and sometimes in life, originality is the one thing needful. I always seek for it, as for hidden treasure, and when I fail to find this jewel of great price, miserable thoughts arise in my mind, and muddy ink flows tardily from my pen.

But let me not rove too far in quest of apologies. I trust that my acquaintance with my readers has been so intimate, they feel the usual prejudices of friendship, and are willing to excuse slight deviations, conscious that I am generally inclined to study many sermons, and to write a few. I hope that this spirit of indulgence abounds, and that *Candour* is a companion so constant to my readers, as never to be *the one thing needful.*

Such is the wandering of desire, that not a mortal can be found, perfectly satisfied with his condition. Let him be most fortunate, let him be most philosophical, and still he wishes it either new modelled, or mended, or enlarged. To this restlessness of temper, one thing is constantly needful, and, as Prior expresses it,

> That cruel *something*, unpossest,
> Corrodes and leavens all the rest.

The boy is eager to be a man, and the maid a wife; the merchant must freight another ship, and the farmer purchase additional acres, to render their respective felicity complete. But imaginary wants, the bastard progeny of inordinate desire, are not the one thing needful, which the reprover of Martha enjoined. To forsake old follies, and to cherish good affections is the genuine interpretation.

Why, sordid shop-keeper, do you charge that simple, unsuspecting country lass a dollar for a piece of your faded ribbon, which would be dear at a shilling? You answer alertly. You point to your money chest; you declare it is not yet full, and that wealth is the one thing needful. Trust me you err. Had you avowed that generosity and good faith were lacking, I should have believed the assertion. But what need have you of money? You have neither generosity to impart, nor spirit to use it. It is a prisoner in your custody. Your bank bills are fresh as from the press of the engraver; and your dollars are more discoloured than a rusty nail. Why do you cry incessantly to your customers ‘Give,’ ‘Give,’ like the daughters of the horseleach, and falsely insist that you are poor, and that gold is the one thing needful.

Why do you assume that prim air, and sit with the stiff uprightness of a may-pole, quoth I to a coquette, whom I observed, at church, more studious of her looks than of the litany, and gazing with more devotion at tall striplings, than at the parson. Oh, sir, to morrow is my twenty-ninth birth-day. I must be quickly married. A husband is a necessary piece of household furniture. To an *old* maid he is undoubtedly the one thing needful.

In one of the most soothing odes of antiquity, Horace assures his friend Grosphus, that ease is the universal prayer. I have often thought, in my most sanguine, as well as in my most sedate humour, that the one thing needful, the grand desideratum, the philosopher's stone, in the alchymy of mind, is tranquillity. To be tranquil is the natural wish of every student, for all his studies are vain, interrupted, and perplexed, without Stillness, Solitude, and Quiet, are the constant inmates of his cloister. Juvenal supposes it impossible that he, who is embroiled with the sordid cares of life, could write ingeniously. Hence, the poet infers that competence was *the one thing needful.* Every valetudinarian adds health as another, and Mr. Pope, who, though he possessed but one of these graces, yet well knew the charms and merit of all, avers that they equally satisfy sensation and reflection. May these divine sisters soothe or gladden every worthy individual among my readers, and, if blest with such charming companions, may nocupidity tempt men to hanker after forbidden things, or to consider enormous wealth, or unlimited power, as *the one thing needful.*

MISCELLANY.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

Essay on the dignity of Man.

The dignity of man affords a source of wonder and transport. Grace, symmetry, and majesty are the attributes of his form, and proclaim a being of high and exalted nature. He is widely different in an extensive variety of important circumstances, from all the inferior orders of material, and animal creation. The mechanism of his system is more nice, more complicated, more grand. All objects upon this globe, animate and inanimate, have their correspondent contrasts, man, only excepted. His nature appears to be more analogous to the divine essence than to any other being. He stalks, with lordly mien over the earth, directing his view towards the vast horison. Surrounding creation announces his sovereign destiny. Every thing promotes his service, or fears his power. For him, day and night, in grateful succession descend upon the earth: for him the seasons, in harmonious order, circle round the varied year. The most refractory and impetuous of the elements obey his will, minister to his pleasure and advance his glory. By his astonishing skill and power, he deduces from the assistance of the subtle air, essential support and luxurious nourishment; constructs the most useful and glorious machinery; derives a copious flood of the most enchanting harmony. Fire, the use of which is peculiar to man, enlarges the sphere of his enjoyments; since it animates his frame, and is instrumental in the manufacture of innumerable metals and works, conspicuously useful and ornamental in human life. The wide expanse of Rivers of Seas and of Oceans, wafts to him the curiosities and blessings of every clime. The orb on which he dwells is full of beauty, grandeur and beneficence: it is a paradise abundant in all the advantages that could adorn, beautify and enoble his nature. Is not then, the dignity of man obviously manifest from a calm survey of his external circumstances? But let us, for a moment, examine the nobler part of his exalted frame; let us contemplate the transcendent excellencies of his divine and immortal soul. O how grand, how transporting, how wonderful this object! Reason which is a distinguishing attribute of man, has extended his views through the various systems and objects and relations, that exist in the boundless domain of universal nature. By the illumination of this celestial faculty he has formed society and government; ascertains the circumstances and revolutions of the blessed orbs of Heaven; listens with joy and admiration ineffable to the dissolving music and awful thunder of the spheres; enlarges

his piety and warms his adoration of the great eternal. The talent of imagination proclaims the divinity of man. It grasps at the empire of creative power. In the arts of painting, architecture, sculpture and poetry, it has produced imitation and strokes equally beautiful and transporting with the masterly works of its great original. Often on the daring wings of this amazing faculty, Man creates airy worlds, and peoples them with correspondent inhabitants; ranges through the unexplored fields of unbounded space; soars to the footstool of Almighty God, and thence surveys the immeasurable regions of glory and felicity that encircle the eternal throne. Memory is also an illustrious principle of this exalted being. By it he can trace things back to the origin of time; contemplate the wonders and circumstances of every age; admire the monuments of antient art and science, and aggregate exhaustless treasures of multifarious wisdom. Taste is an elegant power of man. It opens to his mind and heart, a large field of delight and improvement. With what transport do we, through this faculty, survey the beauties, the novelties, the sublimities of nature! How do our souls dilate with joy, and glow with admiration at the curious miracles of ingenious art, the elevated sentiments of conscious virtue; the noble compositions of heaven-born genius! Hail author of our constitution: Hail parent of goodness,

> ....." Not content,
> With every food of life, to nourish man,
> By kind illusion of the wond'ring sense
> Thou mak'st all nature beauty to his eye,
> Or music to his ear."

Language is the peculiar gift of human kind. Its advantages, its glories, transcend the powers of description. Devoid of this art, man would be a solitary, forlorn, furious being; without union, without strength, without improvement. Through the instrumentality of language only, can the other talents of man, attain their high and important destinies. It is the crown of human excellence. It is the consummation of human grandeur. It furnishes a delicious exuberance of refined and exalted luxuries. But who does not know the powers of language? Who is not sensible that it is indispensible to the existence, the happiness, the glory of social life? Who has not felt its thunders and lightnings, its celestial harmonies, its divine inspirations?

The moral beauties of the heart are too amiable, too godlike, to be unnoticed. What heavenly joys do we derive from the charming sentiments of tender compassion; of parental and filial affection; of harmonious friendship; of universal justice! What irradiations of divine bliss beam through our souls in defending our liberty and country; in consoling the afflicted; in assisting the distressed! Such then is the exalted dignity of man. But while we exult in the grandeur and happiness of our nature, let us remember the celestial fountain whence it proceeds: let us adore, with veneration and gratitude, the merciful God, whose beneficent hand has poured around us so many shining and immortal glories! — T

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

> "My wanderings and my fate resembling yours,
> At length I settled on these Lybian shores;
> And, touch'd with miseries myself have known,
> I view with pity, woes so like my own."

In the spring, when 'surly winter passes off,' and 'softer gales succeed;' when nature seems springing into bloom and benevolence, and the feathered choir commence singing, their 'wild notes to the listening waste,' man experiences a renovated glow of spirits' and feels his bosom warmed with the invigorating force of renewed life. Though

> 'As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
> And winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,'

The season imparts a genial influence upon the soul, and inspires it with sublime meditation. The calm temperature and pure serenity of the mind induce thought and contemplation, and by degrees exalt the imagination to a survey of the beauty and symmetry of nature's wondrous works. Incited by these physical and moral operations, I rose the other morning early from my couch of moss, and for the first time this season, resumed my former accustomed perambulations. Nature seemed lost in silence, and the world resting in calm repose, when the whistling of the early ploughboy, the song of the chirping robin, and the sound of incipient business swelling from distant villages, proclaimed the approach of returning morn, and cheered the rising day. Supported by my ancient staff, and filled with ideas congenial to a morning ramble, I quit the solitary seat of my repose, and wander over the vegetating herbage of fields and medows, 'musing praise and looking lively gratitude,' finding

> 'Tongues in trees, books in running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.'

'Sedate to think and watching each event,' I strayed with careless and heedless steps over the morning dew, till the noise of village bustle filled the ambient air with the echoes of the woods of the mountains, and warned me of a too near approach to the busy scenes of life. Obedient to this ruffling suggestion, which disordered for a moment the gentle smoothness of my thoughts, and unclosed the circle of my devout meditations, I turned suddenly around to retrace my vagrant footsteps, when a 'youth came posting over a crossing way,' and arrested my attention. The melancholy gloom which seemed depicted in his countenance, and the profound study in which he appeared to be absorbed by the half inclining of the head, prepossessed me in his favour and interested me in his behalf. Solicitous to learn and pry into the cause of the sadness which hovered over and darkened his mind, and enjoy the 'luxury of doing good,' by an effort at its removal, I quickened my pace and hastened my approaches unperceived to the stranger. Upon a nearer view I found him to be in the bloom of youth, and regarded him as a flower which I could wish to nourish and cherish with the tenderness and solicitude of a virgin. The mingled emotions of sympathy and pity warmed my bosom, and interested my affections, as I drew nearer and nearer, and prompted me to accost him in a language suited to my advanced period of life, with the abrupt inquiry, whither he was wandering, and what was the cause of his apparent gloom and dejection of mind? Struck with surprise at perceiving a stranger near him whom he had hitherto unobserved, and awoke suddenly from his reverie, he seemed unconscious of the inquiry, and just 'nodding how do you do,' was passing slowly along, when I again interrupted him by a renewal of the interrogatory. His surprise having subsided, he turned and walked towards me, and after the usual prelusive greetings and salutations, for I am not yet entirely heedless of those 'sweet courtesies of life,' manifested a willing disposition to mingle in 'social converse.' The assiduities with which I courted familiarity, banished the restraint which superior age naturally imposes, conciliated his esteem and confidence, and soon

> 'Words follow'd words, from question answer flow'd
> And talk of various kinds deceiv'd the road.'

Though in age differing, we joined in heart, and the mistrustful character which an excess of confidence had fastened upon him, for 'even his failing lean'd to virtues' side,' was now detached, and he opened his heart with unreserved frankness. Proofs of a friendship so disinterested, obtained a ready belief, and dispersed every doubt of an abuse of confidence. Conversation was now grown mutually familiar, and I soon discovered him to be a person of genius and reading, and adorned with the graces of good nature and urbanity of manners. Yet not by

> 'Report of books alone the world he knew;

He had by an experience of mankind, sorowful and vexatious, learnt their follies and vices, and felt their hypocrisy and ingratitude. In disclosing the cause of his wandering among the fields and the meadows in gloomy and melancholy meditation, he stated that, as being the day which completed his legal maturity, and placed him upon the stage of manhood. The circumstances under which he then found himself, just entering into new and extensive scenes of life, with no fostering friend to inculcate the admonitory lessons of experience, and cherish and support him amidst the conflicting vices of the world, gave rise to disturbing doubts and perplexing reflections. Finding himself thrown upon the wide world, under disadvantages peculiar to himself, he for the first time became sensible that he had a 'part to act' in common with the rest of mankind, and halted in suspension between resolution and doubt, what course in future to pursue. I took occasion at this propitious juncture to descant and moralize on the natural progress of man from childhood to youth, maturity, old age; to point out by the history of my own life the vices and follies of the world, the selfish actions of mankind, and their malignant and perfidious nature. In this picture of deformity, were interspersed delineations descriptive of the common and fashionable amusements of society, the natural and active principles in mankind, which with such boldness urges them on in the pursuit of enjoyments not worth the desire of attaining, and the inanity attending the possession of those fancied pleasures, acquired at the expense of health, innocence, and virtue. The prevalence of luxury, whose seducing arts, diffusing in luxuriant profusion their fascinations with insidious joy, decoy and corrupt the hearts of the young and unsuspicious, was exhibited as a brilliant trait in the character of mankind, and a source of bitter reflexion to the virtuous and contemplative mind. I was led to indulge in this conversation by the interest I took in my young friend's behalf, and to afford him the benefit of my experience and age, from a belief that at his time of life, such experience would be of more service than when he had lived long enough to acquire it of himself. 'That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,' was a reflection which now seemed to occupy his mind, and embitter every relish for those scenes where the 'madding croud contend in ignoble strife,' and 'shouting folly rings discordant round.' Sick and weary of the dull and unvaried routine of diurnal dissipation and consequent evening ennui, his heart now panted only for a life of solitude, and retirement to 'sweet oblivion' of perplexing cares, unmolested, undisturbed, by the 'world's proud contemptuous sneer.' In this favourable state of his mind, I seized the occasion, just as we came in view of my little cottage, to strengthen his impression of aversion to society, and allure him to 'scenes where no troubles e'er annoy,' by remarking upon the fashionable vices of the world, and depicting the contrasted delights of retirement. I pointed him to my lowly dwelling, in 'nature's simplest charms arrayed,' overshadowed on the one side by the ever-green foliage of the hemlock, and on the other overspread by the withered arms of an ancient and venerable oak;

> 'And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
> To tempt her new fledg'd offspring to the skies,

I tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to virtue's scenes, and led the way.'

Time passed away with insensible speed, and our wanderings brought us imperceptibly to the close of day. The dusky shades of evening began now to appear, my wearied limbs admonished me of their necessary repose, and I gladly took the occasion to invite my young friend to enjoy with myself the hospitality of my humble mansion. I pressed him with solicitations, and, in the courteous language of one of my forefathers, urged him

'To spend the night, and freely share
Whate'er my cell bestows,
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.'

The rapid approaches of night, and the distance from his residence, challenged and forced a compliance, and we advanced with quick and hasty step to the 'wandering stranger's hospitable home.' It was then my threshold first received a guest; and I have marked it upon the walls of my little mansion, and cut it upon the surrounding trees, as a day which snatched a victim from a world of vice and sorrow, promises an increase of happiness, and bestowed a companion to spend with me a 'life of piety and peace.' But, why here nourish unseen his growing virtues, and confine them to 'waste their sweetness on the desert air?' To this question, the history of his life, for he 'with many a tale repaid the nightly bed,' which will soon be the employment of my pen, and accompany my successive communications, will furnish a ready and satisfactory answer. His life is marked with incidents more varied and striking than generally fall within the compass of his years, and is calculated to awaken the feelings and excite the interest of those who listen with pity to the 'tale of woe.'

Tomorrow is the promised period of his return, when he is to abandon a world of vice and sorrow, throw himself into the bosom of solitude, taste the sweets of a secluded life, and once more gladden the cottage and the heart of his aged friend.—But, the scene may be changed! Tomorrow may not arrive; for, as the poet says—'*Where is tomorrow? In the other world. To thousands this is true, and the reverse is sure to none.*' Tomorrow! Tomorrow, the green turf may

'The place of fame and elegy supply,'—

and the wild violet and rose, blossom, to adorn the unhonoured grave of *the Hermit*.

[From Davy's Researches, Chemical and Philosophical. A description of Mr. Davy's feelings on respiring a quantity of nitrous oxide, after he had been enclosed in an atmosphere of the gas, by being shut up in a breathing box for an hour and a quarter.]

A thrilling extending from the chest to the extremities was almost immediately produced. I felt a sense of tangible extension highly pleasurable in every limb; my visible impressions were dazzling and apparently magnified: I heard distinctly every sound in the room, and was perfectly aware of my situation.* By degrees as the pleasurable sensations increased, I lost all connexion with external things; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through my mind, and were connected with words in such a manner, as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. I existed in a world of newly connected and newly modified ideas. I theorised; I imagined that I made discoveries. When I was awakened from this semi-delirious trance by Dr. Kinglake, who took the bag from my mouth, indignation and pride were the first feelings produced by the sight of the persons about me. My emotions were enthusiastic and sublime; and for a minute I walked round the room perfectly regardless of what was said to me. As I recovered my former state of mind, I felt an inclination to communicate the discoveries I had made during the experiment. I endeavoured to recal the ideas, they were feeble and indistinct; one collection of terms, however, presented itself: and with the most intense belief and prophetic manner, I exclaimed to Dr. Kinglake, '*Nothing exists but thoughts!—the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains!*'

* In all these experiments after the first minute, my cheeks became purple.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WILKIE, D. D.

[Continued.]

'Hard circumstances,' says Dr. Robertson, 'oppressed Wilkie for the greater part of his life, and produced that strong attention to money-matters, with which he has been reproached by those who could not explain it. It proceeded, in fact, from a singular love of independence, the passion of a stately mind. He shuddered at the thought of coming under the power of any man, and could hardly think of walking the streets, lest any person, to whom he was indebted, should meet him. When his father died, he had to borrow the money that was to bury him. He went to an uncle for 10*l.* and was refused. These events could but ill sit upon his mind. After he came to better days, 'I have often heard him say,' says Mr. Liston, 'I have shaken hands with poverty up to the very elbow, and I wish never to see her face again.' Hence a parsimony to the extreme. Yet, in wealth, would we brand him with the love of money for its own sake. Another passion came in: He loved his relations; and it was his common maxim, that no man should ever break with his kindred. He was not long minister of Ratho, till he apprehended his life would be short: He had two sisters that he feared would be left destitute, immediately upon his death. Apprehensive on their account, he always lived plain, heaped up every penny, and at last died worth two or three thousand pounds; not so much acquired by savings, however, as by a rapid profit from his own favourite act of agriculture, in the perfect skill of which no man excelled him. At the same time, after the short period that he became possessed of money, his friends could see that he could part with it. It was his custom to pay the bill, even when travelling with several of his relations that could afford their share. After he settled at St. Andrew's, his private charities were not less than 20*l.* a year. Born for intense thought; for total absence of mind upon ordinary matters; plunged in poverty in early life, without a domestic about his person, and even without the means of any elegance whatever, he naturally became slovenly, dirty, and even nauseous. He chewed tobacco to excess, and at last made himself believe, that it was good for his health. It seems, on all hands agreed, that no mortal was equal to him in conversation and argument. His own explanation of it was, that he took the right side, while his antagonists took the wrong, to display their ingenuity and learning. I have heard the late Dr. Wallace, author of the 'Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind,' say, nobody could venture to cope with him. His knowledge, in almost all things, was deep, solid, and unanswerable. His reasoning was plain to a child. In shrewdness, he had no rival. Both his manner and thoughts were masculine, in a degree peculiar to himself. Dr. Smith says, it was an observation of the late Lord Elibank, that wherever Wilkie's name happened to be mentioned in a company, learned or unlearned, it was not soon dropped: Every body had much to say. In short, he was great and an odd man. His character, I will venture to say, will never be successfully written, but by a great hand; and even, when written, the theory of the man is above common comprehension.'

'With regard to Wilkie's faith in Christianity,' says Dr. Thomson, 'I know, that he said prayers in his family every evening, after he had laid aside the character of a divine, and grace at table, with his eyes shut, and his hands folded together, in a posture of supplication, and with every mark of the greatest fervour. He would sometimes prolong his graces, at the College-table, beyond the bounds that the keen appetites of the hungry students would have prescribed to it. Even in these short prayers there was often some thought not more devout than pleasing and ingenious. For example: 'O Lord! thou art the author of all our wants, and thou suppliest them, from the inexhausted stores of thy bounty.' He appeared to be a firm believer in God. The existence of a deity he considered as the simplest, and, therefore, the most rational method of solving the phenomena of the universe. This was agreeable to the Newtonian System, which supposes a vacuum and liberty of action; and that a voluntary fiat of God launched forth the heavenly orbs with that degree of impulse or momentum precisely, which corresponded with centripetal force, and which would not carry them beyond their orbits. The moral doctrines of Christianity, the divine character of Jesus Christ, he held in the most profound veneration. That sacred person he undoubtedly considered as an angel sent from God, to enlighten and to bless the world. Whether he believed in the necessity of an atonement (a doctrine which, as Dr. Smith observes in his 'Theory of Moral Sentiments,' is so consistent with the natural sentiments of mankind), and the other peculiar doctrines of the Christian religion, I cannot, with certainty affirm. He sometimes lamented, that he doubted. But whether this doubt settled into scepticism, or that reason, and an imagination, sensible in the highest degree, to the ravishing prospects held out in the gospel, triumphed over doubt, and confirmed his wavering mind in the Christian faith, I know not. He would often exclaim to his most intimate friends: 'O! if I could firmly believe all the doctrines of Christianity, how vain and insipid every enjoyment and every pursuit in this world would appear!

'It was remarkable,' says Professor Dalzel, 'that Wilkie, with all his learning, could neither read nor spell. I myself was witness to his ignorance of the art of reading. When I was a very young man, residing at Hatton, Wilkie came from St. Andrew's, on a visit to Lord Lauderdale. He staid a few days, and all the personal knowledge I had of Wilkie was acquired during that time. 'The Judgment of Paris,' a poem by Dr. Beattie, was brought to Hatton one of those days, as a new publication. Wilkie asked me to retire with him, that we might read and criticise the poem together. At first, when he began to read, I imagined he did not understand the verses at all, as he surely committed the saddest havoc, in point of quantity and pronunciation, that can well be imagined, and even miscalled several of the words: And yet his criticisms were so just, and so happily expressed, that I was charmed with the elegance of his taste, and the propriety of his observations.'

As a poet, his compositions are not less distinguished by imagination and judgment, than his manners were remarkable for eccentricity and originality. In both, we are pleased to find that feeling disposition which characterises the good man, and the ingenious, sublime and moral poet.

His Epigoniad, if he had written nothing else, is sufficient to entitle him to an honourable rank among the poets of our nation, with whom he is now associated. It is a legitimate epic poem, of the same species of composition with the 'Iliad' and the 'Æneid,' which is universally allowed to be, of all poetical works, the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult in execution.

'To contrive a story,' says Dr. Blair, in his excellent 'Lectures,' 'which shall please and interest all readers, by being at once entertaining, important, and instructive, to fill it with suitable incidents, to enliven it with a variety of characters and of descriptions, and, throughout a long work, to maintain that propriety of sentiment, and that elevation of style, which the epic character requires, is unquestionably the highest effort of poetical genius.'

What talents are necessary to so arduous an attempt! What vigour of imagination, extent of knowledge, solidity of understanding, and powers of language! In order to judge whether Wilkie has succeeded in this exalted species of writing, or not, an appeal should be made, not so much to the abstracted rules of criticism, as to the taste and feeling of the sympathetic and judicious reader: For it is sentiment only that can judge of sentiment. When the heart of the reader remains cold and unaffected, the most elaborate performance is defended, in vain, by all the art of the most expert rhetorician; and, on the contrary, where nature is displayed in just colours, and the imagination astonished by scenes of terror, or expanded by such as are sublime, a satisfaction is enjoyed, which is but little marred by a deviation from unity of time, place, or action.

In forming an estimate of the epic poem of Wilkie, we are to consider what degree of importance there is in his moral, and what of artifice in his fable; what kind of manners and characters he has exhibited, and if his characters are properly supported by their sentiments and actions. Are his digressions natural? Are his views sublime? Is his imagery beautiful, and his diction varied with his varying subject?

It would extend this narrative to an undue length, to examine the Epigoniad, with respect to each of these heads, particularly. We shall, therefore content ourselves with briefly running over the moral, and giving a short analysis of the fable, occasionally observing on other particulars, as we go along, and collecting a few specimens of those great beauties in which it abounds.

As the end or moral of the 'Paradise Lost' is to show the bitter fruits that spring from disobedience to the laws of God; and as the end or moral of the 'Iliad' is to display the fatal effects of furious and deep resentment and discord, so the moral of the Epigoniad teaches the dire disasters that flow from the passion of love. This lesson is inculcated by a story interwoven with primeval manners, and with Grecian mythology. The first of these circumstances is rather an advantage than a disadvantage, as we are acquainted with the manners described, not only from the writings of Homer, but also from those of Moses, and as they diffuse over the poem an air of venerable simplicity: The second could not be avoided, it being an article in the Grecian creed, that the Gods often interpose visibly and bodily in human affairs: nor is the incredibility of mythology so great a disadvantage in poetry, as may be imagined: For, first, as there is a degree of belief that attends the vivid perception of every object, the beautiful and consistent tales that are told by the poets, of the gods and other superior beings, gain a temporary credit; and this is sufficient for the purpose of the poet. Secondly, The heathen mythology operates on our minds, with the more facility that it has been impressed on our minds in our youth. We are acquainted with the different characters of the gods and goddesses; we know, beforehand, what part they are likely to act on particular occasions, and are pleased when we find the poet supporting, with propriety, the character of each. A like observation may be extended to the heroes and other famous personages of antiquity. We are acquainted, as it were, with their persons; we are interested in their fortunes; and, therefore, we are infinitely more affected by scenes in which they appear as actors, than we would be by scenes in which a poet should introduce persons and fictions with which we are wholly unacquainted. Boileau, the greatest critic of the French nation, was of this opinion:

'La fable offre a l' esprit mille agréments divers,
Là tous les noms heureux semblent nes pour les vers
Ulysse, Agamemnon, Oreste, Idomenée,
Helene, Menelas, Paris, Hector, Enée.'

It is certain, that there is, in that poetic ground, a kind of enchantment which allures every person of a tender and lively imagination: nor is this impression diminished, but rather much increased by our early introduction to the knowledge of it, in our perusal of the Greek and Latin classics. The same great French critic makes the apology of Wilkie in his use of the ancient mythology.

'Ainsi dans cet amas de nobie fictions,
Le poete s'egaye en mille inventions,
Orne, eleve embellit, agrandit toutes choses,
Et trouve s'ons sa main des fleurs toujours ecloses.'

It would seem, indeed, that, if some supernatural machinery be not admitted, epic poetry, at least all the marvellous parts of it, must be entirely abandoned. 'Without admiration,' says Dr. Hurd, in his 'Letters on Chivalry and Romance' (which cannot be effected but by the marvellous of celestial invention, I mean the agency of superior natures really existing, or by the illusion of the fancy taken to be so), no epic poem can be long-lived. The Christian religion, for many reasons, is unfit for the fabulous ornaments of poetry: The plan of Milton's work being altogether theological, his supernatural beings form not the machinery, but are the principal actors in the poem. The introduction of allegory, after the manner of Voltaire, is liable to many objections; and though a mere historical epic poem like 'Leonidas,' may have its beauties, it will always be inferior to the force and pathetic words of tragedy, and must resign to that species of poetry the precedency which the former composition has always challenged among the productions of human genius.

The fable of the Epigoniad is this: The poet supposes that Cassandra, the daughter of Alcander king of Pelignium in Italy, was pursued by the love of Echetus, a barbarous tyrant in the neighbourhood; and as her father rejected his addresses, he drew on himself the resentment of the tyrant, who made war upon him, and forced him to retire into Etolia, where Diomed gave him protection. This hero falls himself in love with Cassandra, and is so fortunate as to make equal impressions on her heart; but, before the completion of his marriage, he is called to the siege of Thebes, and leaves, as he supposes, Cassandra in Etolia with her father. But Cassandra, anxious for her lover's safety, and unwilling to part from the object of her affections, had secretly put on a man's habit, had attended him in the camp, and had fought by his side in all his battles. The poem opens with the appearance of the Epigoni before the walls of Thebes, resolute to signalize their own names, and to redeem the Argive glory, by its reduction. The gods, assembled on the hundred heads of high Olympus, view from afar Thebes doomed to perish by the Argives, and principally, by the hands of Diomed. Juno and Pallas, favourable to the Argives, seek the ruin of Thebes. Venus, in order to frustrate the design of both Juno and Pallas, deliberates concerning the proper method of raising the siege. The fittest expedient seems to be the exciting in Diomed a jealousy of Cassandra, and persuading him, that her affections were secretly engaged to Echetus, and that the tyrant had invaded Etolia in pursuit of his mistress. Zelotype, a Paphian nymph, sprung from Cupid and Alecto, offers her services, for this end, to the goddess.

Goddess, these shafts shall compass what you aim,
My mother dipt their points in Stygian flame;
Where'er my father's darts their way have found,
Mine follow deep, and poison all the wound.
By these, we soon, with triumph, shall behold
Pallas deceiv'd, and Juno's self controul'd.

Her person and flight are painted in the most characteristic habiliments and splendid colours that poetry affords.

First to her feet the winged shoes she binds,
Which tread the air and mount the rapid winds;
Aloft they bear her through th' ethereal plain,
Above the solid earth and liquid main;
Her arrows next she takes, of pointed steel,
For sight too small, but terrible to feel.—
A figur'd zone, mysterially design'd,
Around her waist her yellow robe confin'd;
There dark Suspicion lurk'd, of sable hue,
There hasty Rage, her deadly dagger drew;
Pale Envy inly pin'd, and by her side
Stood Frenzy raging with his arms unty'd.
Affronted Pride, with thirst of vengeance burn'd,
And Love's excess to deepest hatred turn'd.
The virgin last, around her shoulders flung
The bow, and by her side the quiver hung:
Then, springing up, her airy course she bends
For Thebes; and lightly o'er the tents descends.
The son of Tydeus 'midst his bands she found
In arms complete, reposing on the ground;
And as he slept, the hero thus address'd;
Her form to fancy's waking eye express'd.

Diomed, moved by the instigations of jealousy, and eager to defend his mistress and his country, calls an assembly of the confederated kings, and proposes to raise the siege of Thebes, on account of the difficulty of the enterprise and dangers which surround the army. The kings debate concerning the proposal; and here appears a great diversity of characters aad sentiments, suitable to each. Theseus, the general, breaks out into a passion at the proposal; but is pacified by Nestor. Idomeneus rises, and reproaches Diomed for his dishonourable counsel; and, among other topics, upbraids him with his degeneracy from his father's bravery. The debate is closed by Ulysses, who informs the prince, that the Thebans are preparing to march out in order to attack them, and that it is vain to deliberate any longer concerning the continuance of the war. The kings resolve to prosecute the war, and Diomed, though stung with love, and jealousy of Echetus, yields to their voice. The nations and tribes that opposed the Argives, being described in the manner of Homer, a battle commences before the walls of Thebes; and the Theban troops, led on by the brave Leophron, the son of Creon the king, repulse the enemy. Pallas descends to the aid of the Argives, in the form of Homoleon. Diomed's charioteer being slain. Cassandra, still concealed under the arms and dress of a soldier, presenting herself to Diomed, offers to take that office upon herself. Diomed declines the offer. Pallas herself assumes the reins, and conducts Diomed in the fight. He kills Leophron. Every thing gives way to this chief, guided by the wisdom, and fortified by the arms of the immortal goddess of Prudence and Wisdom: But Mercury, at the command of Jupiter, gives order to Phœbus to lash

his steeds, and to conclude the day, lest the rapid success of Diomed should precipitate the fall of Thebes before the time fixed by fate. The darkness of the night interrupts the fight, and Diomed is stripped by Mercury of his divine armour. This battle is full of the spirit of Homer. And now the Theban princes, according to ancient custom, sat in council in the gate; the king oppressed with public cares, and with private grief for the death of his son Leophron, proposes to sue for a truce of seven days, that they might grace the dead with funeral obsequies. The priest of Apollo, accompanied by Clytophon, repairs to the Argive tents, to ask a truce; and here follows a long, but very interesting episode, that enchants the reader with the wildness of Salvator Rosa, and astonishes him with the terrors of Sophocles. This episode is intended as an experiment in that kind of fiction which distinguishes the 'Odyssey.' The Theban heralds are conducted, with safety, to the royal tent, where the Argive princes receive them with marks of kindness. After a splendid repast, Clytophon, with great art, addresses the Pylian chief Nestor, reminds him that he was his guest (a circumstance which formed a strong band of friendship, as it does still among barbarous nations) when he fled from the desert shores of Tinacria: Having gained the favour and the attention of Nestor, he relates the wonderful story of his life. Clytophon was the youngest son of Orsilochus, king of Rhodes.

His youngest hope I was, and scarce had seen
The tenth returning summer clothe the green,
When pirates snatch'd me from my native land, &c.

DRAMA.

[*From a London paper.*]

A Comic Opera, called the Cabinet, was performed for the first time yesterday evening.

CHARACTERS.

Curvoso	Mr. Emery.
Lorenzo	Mr. Incledon.
Orlando	Mr. Braham.
Whimsiculo	Mr. Fawcett.
Marquis de Grand Chateau	Mr. Blanchard.
Manikin	Mr. Simmons.
Peter	Mr. Munden.
First Falconer	Mr. King.
Second Falconer	Mr. Williams.
Constantia	Mrs. H. Johnston.
Floretta	Signora Storace.
Crudelia	Mrs. Dibdin.
Curiosa	Mrs. Mattocks.
Leonora	Mrs. Atkins.
Doralice	Mrs. Powell.
Biancha	Mrs. Davenport.

The Cabinet is, we understand, the production of Mr. T. Dibdin, and though, perhaps, not his best, is certainly the most successful of all his dramatic pieces. The title and interest of the Opera are derived from the use made of a splendid Cabinet, containing a beautiful artificial bird, which sings upon the pressure of a secret spring. It is, with other valuable presents, the gift of Orlando, the Prince of an adjacent independent territory, to Constantia, the daughter of Curvoso, an avaricious Italian Count. The principal incidents of the fable may be briefly told.

Curvoso had promised his daughter to Orlando, but upon the unexpected success of Orlando's enemies who suddenly despoil him of his lands, he revokes his consent, and accepts the offer of an old French Marquis, whose well-filled coffers are sufficient to render him amiable in the eyes of the old Count, but not so in those of his daughter, who, after respectfully expostulating with her father on his former promises to Orlando, rejects the Marquis with disdain. Whimsiculo, a confidential servant of Orlando's, is detected in an attempt to convey a letter to Constantia, and her father, glad of a pretext to break with Orlando, directly orders all the presents and trinkets his daughter had received from the young Prince to be instantly returned. Among them is the Cabinet, and in this Constantia conceals herself, to avoid the presence of the Marquis, when her father, enraged at not finding her, and the presents still remaining in her apartment, orders them all to be instantly removed, and seconded by the entreaties of the Marquis, he thus unknowingly sends away his daughter to the very man he wished her to avoid. Orlando thus unexpectedly in possession of his mistress, determines to solicit Curvoso once more, in hopes that the escape of Constantia will alter her father's resolution, as well as the pleasing intelligence that he has repulsed his enemies, and regained his territories; and that the reputation of Constantia may not run the risk of censure, she remains secluded in an apartment of the palace, accessible only to her attendant Floretta, who is to make the bird in the Cabinet sing as a signal of her approach.

In the mean time Crudelia, who is enamoured of Orlando, and who, finding herself rejected, displays all the vindictive rancour of Italian jealousy, learns the retreat of Constantia, and having succeeded in getting her into her power, she commits her to the custody of four bravoes, who are ordered to imprison her in an apartment of the palace (which overlooks a lake) till she can be sent back with disgrace to her father, or effectually concealed from the pursuit of Orlando.

Orlando having repaired to Curvoso, procures the dismissal of the Marquis, and the old Count also consents to strengthen the alliance, by giving his son Lorenzo to Leonora, the sister of Orlando, to whose palace they proceed.

During this, Constantia, in endeavouring to escape from the window of her prison, falls into the lake which flows beneath, but is saved, and conveyed to a fisherman's hut on a small island, by Peter, an old servant of her father's, who had been unjustly discharged by him, and is thus avenged by preserving the daughter of a man whose own life he had formerly saved, and had followed him from England, his native country.

Crudelia finding every attempt to gain Orlando's hand useless, at length gives up her jealousy; and informed of Constantia's escape to the island, acquaints her father with the circumstance. He, with her lover and relation, repair in their gondolas to the island on the lake. Constantia, fearful of Crudelia's emissaries, has taken the disguise of a reputed witch, who, is supposed to be dumb, and before she discovers herself to her friends, informs them (through Biancha, the fisherman's widow, who explains her signs) of several incidents in their own lives, which make them give credit to her supernatural pretensions, and insist on her producing Constantia upon pain of death. She then throws off her disguise, and the piece concludes with general reconciliation.

The subservient incidents of the Opera result from the courtship of Whimsiculo and Floretta, and the jealousy of Curiosa, who loves Whimsiculo, and apes her mistress Crudelia in her persecution of her rival.

The scene is alternately on the neighbouring territories of Orlando and Curvoso, and the unity of time is strictly preserved.

If there be not much to praise, either in the invention or conduct of the plot, there is, however, little to censure. The idea of the Cabinet is, we believe, new to our stage, and is no doubt as allowable as any incident of a similar nature which dramatic writers employ to maintain the interest of their pieces. It is used with some skill, and the stratagem, though not productive of any considerable surprise, is sufficiently strong to arrest the attention of the audience. The piece abounds in pleasing points and humorous allusions; and the language is in general natural, and suited to the respective Characters.

The Author has very judiciously avoided the pathetic and false sublime, which in too many of our modern productions have been carried to a most culpable excess. The business proceeds rapidly, and there is an intimate connexion at least between the principal incidents. We are not struck with much novelty of character; but to the consistency of the different parts there is little to object. The writer's faintest delineation is that of the French Marquis, and his most perfect that of Peter, drawn evidently with a view of pourtraying the integrity, courage, and feeling of a British Seaman.

The music which combines the talents of Reeves, Moorhead, Davie, Corri and Braham, is distinguished for a variety of science and taste, and their different styles of composition, are displayed with an effect which could not be justly expected from the union of so many masters. Braham takes the lead in the number of airs. The master-pieces of the evening were Braham's first ballad, composed and sung by himself. Storace's second air, composed by Corri, which is marked with genuine melody; the Duet between Braham and Storace, in the beginning of the second act: the Duet between Incledon and Braham, composed by the latter, and the Hunting Song in the third Act, by Davy, which was given by Incledon, with all his fulness and richness of tone. As a musical treat, the Opera unquestionably possesses irresistible attractions, and will no doubt prove uncommonly popular. Its chief and peculiar merit is the judicious and seasonable manner in which the airs are introduced. The talents of the performers are brought forward in the most advantageous situations. Braham pleases more than on any former occasion, by divesting himself of many redundant divisions and luxuriances, which were calculated rather to shew his powers of execution than to affect the heart; Incledon gives unusual force of expression to his airs; Storace excites more interest, and Mrs. H. Johnston and Mrs. Atkins sang their airs with great taste and delicacy. To the true comic humour of Munden in Peter, and the spirit of Fawcett in Whimsiculo, the Author is highly indebted for the unqualified success with which his piece has been crowned. Not a murmur of disapprobation was heard throughout, and it was given out for this evening with loud and reiterated plaudits.

Mr. Harris has evinced in the scenery, dresses, and decorations, his accustomed taste and liberality.

The encores were so very numerous, that were we to mention them, it would be necessary to notice almost every Air, Duet, and Trio of the Opera.

Of the Poetry, we subjoin the following specimens:

SONG. *Floretta.* (CORRI)

The bird in yonder cage confin'd,
Sings but to lovers young and true;
Then pray approach if you can find
The picture suit, ah! no not you.

Good-nature only wakes the lay,
A father kind the feat may do;
Then pray approach if you can say,
The picture suits, ah! no not you.

AIR. *Orlando.* (BRAHAM.)

When absent from her, whom my soul holds most dear,
What medley of passions invade!
In this bosom what anguish, what hope, and what fear
I endure for my beautiful maid.

In vain I seek pleasures to lighten my grief,
Or quit the gay throng for the shade;
Nor retirement, nor solitude yield me relief,
When away from my beautiful maid.

LAW INTELLIGENCE.

WOOD v. DENYER.

This was an action brought by the Plaintiff, a tailor in Pall Mall, to recover of the defendant the sum of 58*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.* a debt contracted for clothes during his infancy, and a further sum of 4*l.* 4*s.* for money lent. It appeared that the defendant, at the time the debt was incurred, was clerk in the house of Mr. Boddington, of Market-lane, and that although he was only the son of the Petworth carrier, in no very great line of business, he had, in the course of fifteen months, no less then seven coats, ten pair of breeches, and a proportionate number of waistcoats; besides which the plaintiff had lent him four guineas. The defendant had paid 30*l.* into court. It was attempted to be proved, that the defendant had made an absolute promise of payment since he came of age, but it appeared he had merely promised to give the plantiff a bond, payable in the event of his receiving a legacy, to which he expected to be entitled upon the termination of a cause in Chancery.

Mr. Park for the defendant, observed, that this was a cause of very great importance to the rising generation. He was well acquainted with the character of Mr. Boddington, and he was sure he would not have been well pleased to have kept the defendant in his service, had he known he had been so extravagant as to have had seven coats in the short space of fifteen months. The learned counsel having, by reasonable arguments, and palpable deductions, shewn, upon the face of the plaintiff's own evidence, that the promise of payment, after the defendant came of age, was conditional, and dependent upon contingences, left the question to the Jury merely upon the point, whether the articles furnished were necessary for a person in the defendant's situation and rank of life. He contended that the 30*l.* paid into court was an ample sum.

Lord Ellenborough said, there were two questions for the jury; first, whether the defendant, after he came of age, had completely ratified and confirmed the obligation entered upon during his non-age, so as to make it now liable, or had only sanctioned it conditionally; and, secondly, whether, if that fact was not proved, the sum paid into court was sufficient, laying out of the question the advance of four guineas, which was certainly a most mischievous thing for a tradesman to do, with regard to a young man, like the defendant, as it could only have been done with a view to encourage him to go to places of dissipation. As to his ratification of the contract, he had stated he would pay when he came to his fortune, and, when talking about a bond, he said he would settle and arrange the account, when he received a legacy he expected. He had offered to make the bond payable, when his affairs in chancery should be settled: but it is evident he had made no admission of the debt, in case his affairs should take an adverse turn. It was consequently not a promise till the condition was performed; it was merely a conditional promise, and therefore he was clearly not liable. This reduced it to the other question, whether 30*l.* was an adequate sum. The station in life of the defendant had been proved. He was the son of a waggoner, but not one of that description which ranked among persons of the first commercial consequence. His lordship said, he had particularly endeavoured to ascertain this fact, because he remembered hearing it proved, that a Mr. Pickford, a waggoner and carrier, had dealings to so large an extent, that he was able to bear up against a loss of 10,000*l.* in the course of one winter, occasioned by the canals being frozen up. A similar proof of immense capital has occured, in the case of Mr. Russell, of Bath. The situation of the defendant's father was very different; he was the proprietor but of one waggon; therefore, with regard to a young man like the defendant, it was a moral obligation, upon the part of a tradesman, not to extend the reasonable limits of his credit. Was it to be endured, that a lad, in a merchant's counting-house, should have seven coats in fifteen months? What was the effect of such extravagance, but to enable him to make an appearance beyond his sphere in life. It tended to lead him into habits of idleness, corruption, and dissipation. The learned counsel had justly observed, that the encouragement given by such tradesmen as the plaintiff to unthinking youth, afforded them access to scenes where their passions were irritated, and induced them, in order to support an expense beyond their means, to rob their masters, and involve themselves in ruin, infamy and disgrace. He was of opinion, that the 30*l.* paid into court was full enough for a youth circumstanced as the defendant was. The jury would however, look into the bill, and say whether it was, or was not, reasonable, putting out of the question the four guineas advanced, to which the plaintiff was clearly not entitled.

The jury, after a moment's consideration, returned a verdict for the defendant.

MISCELLANEOUS PARAGRAPHS.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

He would be a very indifferent farmer, who complained that his sheep did not plough, or his horses yield him wool: though, it would be an idea *full of equality*. They may think this right in rural economy, who think it available in the politic.

Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Mœvi!
Atque idem jungat vulpes et mulgeat hircos.

—

The edifice of DEMOCRACY, however it may argue the *invention* of its builders, or however it may captivate the gaze of fools and children, far from being a castle ,or founded on a rock; i snothing but a fragile, painted pasteboard exhibition, the jest of every passenger, and the sport of every rising gust. Like that other shewy, yet tottering building described by SPENSER;

It is a goodly heap for to behold
And speaks the praises of the workman's wit:
But full great pity, that so fair a mold
Does on so weak foundation tottering sit.

—

Dr. Barrow with the *voice potential* of truth and experience, avers, that until it be opposed by something better than fanciful theory and fashionable aziness, he will suppose the ancient CLASSICAL DISCIPLINE sufficiently vindicated by the long continued and general practice of the best schools. Instad of viewing whatever can plead ancient prescription as having its foundation in prejudice, and its popularity from custom, we should consider that as excellent which has had the sanction of ages.

—

Mr. BURKE pertinently remarks in one of his *Testamentary* pamphlets, that

'We have not yet considered as we ought, the dreadful energy of a state, in which the property is in complete subjection, and where nothing rules but the mind of desperate men. The condition of a commonwealth not governed by its property, was a combination of things, which the learned and ingenious speculator Harrington, who has tossed about society into all forms, never could imagine to be possible. We have seen it; the world has felt it; and if the world will shut their eyes to this state of things, they will feel it more. The rulers there have found their resources in crimes. The discovery is dreadful; the mine exhaustless. They have every thing to gain, and they have nothing to lose. They have a boundless inheritance in hope; and there is no medium for them, betwixt the highest elevation and death with infamy. Never can they, who, from the miserable servitude of the desk, have been raised to empire again, submit to the bondage of a starving bureau, or the profit of copying music, or writing *plaidoyers* by the sheet.'

—

Dr. Goldsmith in his Remarks on the present state of polite learning, adverting to an obsolete custom in colleges where the indigent servitor *waits upon* the opulent commoner, remarks that "Pride itself has dictated to the fellows of our colleges the absurd passion of being attended at meals, and on other public occasions, by those poor men, who, willing to be scholars, come in upon some charitable foundation. It implies a contradiction for men to be at once learning the *liberal* arts, and, at the same time, treated as *slaves;* at once studying freedom, and practising servitude.

—

The great events of great men, are governed by the same capricious influence which directs the little events of little men. The web of fate is woven by the hand of fortune, and she, industrious yet indiscriminate spinster, takes the casual ball from her basket, and careless works, now with threads of gold, and now with damaged yarn.

—

A lively writer, adverting to that *revolutionary* system in Belgium, which has utterly defaced the opulence and prosperity of the Dutch, remarks, that it could hardly have been imagined that those unwieldy porpoises, sleeping in stagnated water, should ever leap out to frolic and gambol with uncouth airiness to the national tune of Ca Ira.

—

One Elderton who had been originally an attorney in the sheriff's courts of London, and afterwards a comedian, was a facetious fuddling companion, whose tippling and whose rhymes rendered him famous among his contemporaries. He at length fell a martyr to his bottle. His epitaph has been recorded by Camden and translated by Oldeys.

Hic situs est sitiens, atque ebrius Eldertonus
Quid dico hic situs est? hic potius sitis est.

Dead drunk here Elderton doth lie;
Dead as he is, he still is dry;
So of him it may well be said,
Here he, but not his thirst, is laid.

—

There is no country in the world where the task of a schoolmaster is so slavish as in America. In the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the wise liberality of the founders of the seats of learning made abundant provision for the teachers of science, and supposed that misery and oppression did not contribute to strengthen a tutor's mind. On the contrary, here where Dr. Franklin has taught men to lay great stress upon the saving of pins and needles, and where **five-penny-bit* calculations are made with elaborate accuracy, the occupation of a schoolmaster has a striking resemblance to that of a scavenger. Dr. Goldsmith very humourously says, 'If you are for a genteel easy profession, bind yourself seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's wheel; but, avoid a school by any means.'

—

The force of arguments, like the strength of an army, depends much upon order and discipline; and, like so many pieces of artillery, all should be brought to bear without interruption to each other upon the point.

* This is the *American*, for a small piece of silver, of the value of three-pence *sterling*.

Yesterday, about three o'clock, a *Bond-street lounger* walked past Charing-cross towards Westminster, very genteelly dressed, and talking to a farmer-like man, of whose arm he had hold, with great fluency and good humour. Examining this *gay buck*, from head to toe, we perceived on his right leg *irons*, glittering like silver, and as elegantly made as those *Macheath* wears.—They were fastened on above a white silk stocking, with a handsome blue silk handkerchief to prevent their making a noise or hurting the leg. What could induce this *dashing pickpocket*, and his *protector*, to prefer walking to Tothillfields in open day, to riding in a coach?

[*Lon. paper.*

—

Dramatic Criticism seems to flourish in America, although, we are sorry to add, at the expense of British dramatic genius. In the *Charleston Courier* of April 27, is a long Philippic of two columns against the degeneracy of the British stage, from much of which we cannot dissent, but the following passages, relative to our new plays, will perhaps be thought to contain more of the *severity* than the *urbanity* of criticism:—'Modern authors flatter themselves that they are giving a picture of nature, when they are only drawing caricatures of her *warts*, *pimples*, and offensive excrescence. Or if by chance those dramatic *cooks* and *caterers* do put upon the boards a character any way like the plain folks of this world, it is dished up *like tripe in a tureen*, tasteless, mawkish, and insipid, and *rolling* in the *half warm water* in which it was *boiled!*'

[*Ibid.*

—

MODERN NOVELS.

Every absurdity has an end—and, as I observe that almost all novels are now of the terrific cast, I hope the insipid repetition of the same *bugbears* will at length work its own cure. In the mean time, should any of your female readers be desirous of catching the *season of terrors*, they may compose two or three very pretty volumes, from the following recipe:

Take—An old castle, half of it ruinous
A long gallery with a great many doors, some secret ones
Three murdered bodies, quite fresh
As many skeletons, in chests and presses
An old women hanging by the neck, with her throat cut
Assassins and desperadoes, quant. suff.
Noises, whispers, and groans, threescore at least.

Mix them together, in the form of three thin *pills*, or volumes, and let them be taken or swallowed, at bed-time or other hour, in any city, village, or watering-place, in England or Wales, and the town of Berwick upon Tweed, (as Proclamations are!) where they will be found equally palatable and sanative by young and middle-aged ladies; with or *without pockets!* I mean in the way of fashion only!—No offence to the provincial ladies, from PROBATUM EST.

—

The most ingenious and erudite Conrad Wolfang Laboriosus Nugatorius of Hall, in Saxony has proved to a demonstration, in the fourteenth volume, page 9974 of his learned treatise *de* Nut shells, that a democracy is one of the most glorious of Governments, for a new, and ignorant people.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

The queries, proposed by 'Philomath,' are not curious enough, to deserve public disquisition.

The lines on M. are not sufficiently polished to gain admission into this Miscellany.

A character of D.....is not of sufficient consequence to attract the attention of the Public.

During the intervals of indisposition, and amid numerous cares, the Editor finds some portion of leisure for the service of the Muses. In the studious hours, which he eagerly seeks, and fondly enjoys, he has long busied himself in the collection and arrangement of various sketches of literary composition, with which, at no distant period, he will attempt to gain the public favour.

The Editor has the promise of several original poems, by Miss Bannerman, a lady of distinguished note in the literary circles of Edinburgh.

Several Scottish poems, obligingly furnished by a friend, eager to obtain literary curiosities, and liberal to impart them, have been perused by the Editor with pleasure. In this satisfaction he hopes that the public will be partakers.

The two *last* volumes of the "Spirit of the Public Journals," we shall be glad to receive. A careful selection of the wit and humour of the English Journalists will always be relished.

We are anxious to ascertain whether the *fourth* volume of Dr. Aikin's "General Biography" has been received in America.

The receipt of London papers from a gentleman at New-York, is gratefully acknowledged. They contain many articles very precious to the Editor.

A file of the Morning Post, during any period, within the current year, is requested.

A file of the St. James's Chronicle, and a series of any of the English papers, devoted to wit and literature, rather than to political or transient topics, will be gladly received.

We wish some gentleman, studious of Parliamentary history, would signify by a letter, addressed to the Editor, where he can find a genuine report of the speeches at large, during the years 1773, 1774, 1775, 1776, 1777, 1778, and 1779, of the younger Lord Lyttleton, including his last brilliant and spirited oration, delivered in the house of Lords, on the 25th of November; the first day of the meeting of Parliament, and *only two days before his death.*

An *original* letter from Edmund Burke to one of his most favoured and confidential friends, upon a very curious and interesting topic, is now in the Editor's possession. He will shortly publish it in the Port Folio.

Original letters, from men of talents and literature, either natives or foreigners, will be always welcome to the Editor, who, among other literary wants, is peculiarly desirous to obtain treasures of this kind.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

ANNA—A SONG.

Written, in Scotland, by a young woman, the daughter of a miller at Edinburgh.

Oh, could we fly, at Sorrow's hour,
To some sequestered fairy vale,
Where Hope delights to rear her bow'r,
And chaunts her song to Summer's gale.
Where Nature wakes the note of joy,
In every green and humid grove,
Where chilling Woe shall ne'er destroy
The blushing flowers of youthful Love.

And angels, borne on sylvan clouds,
At twilight hour their anthems swell,
To charm the Genius of the woods,
Where Peace, the hermit, loves to dwell.

There we would wait, my Anna dear,
Till Death the peaceful scene would close,
And o'er the sod, rais'd on our bier,
Would wandering lovers breathe their woes.

And there the earliest wreaths of Spring
Around the rosy thorn would weave,
And there the Nightingale would sing
Her vespers to the star of eve.

Oh, while I thus in Fancy's dream
Find respite from my rankling care,
The vivid flash of Truth's bright beam
Awakes to anguish and despair.

—

FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

THE WANDERER.

BY THE SAME.

The pale moon sinks in western clouds,
Her last beams on the waters die;
I'll shroud me in these sounding woods,
Thro' whose dark boughs the night-winds sigh.

No home receives my shivering form,
No voice maternal soothes to rest,
Alone I brave the midnight storm,
That freezes my unmantl'd breast.

No bosom heaves the pitying sigh
For the lost wretch that weeps alone,
O'er her brave father's destiny,
Poland and Freedom's patriot son.

Near the low mound, my mother's grave,
For god-like truth her Amred fell;
He scorn'd to live Oppression's slave,
Or Guilt's polluted triumphs swell.

Oh, God! I saw Ambition rear,
'Mid sulphur'ous clouds, his banners red,
While shrieking Nature's burning tear
Bath'd many a lov'd, unburied head.

Chill'd with the cold nocturnal dew,
Far from my ruin'd home I fled,
O'er fields where War's infernal crew
Exulted o'er the mangled dead.

Yet, 'mid these shades, Misfortune's child,
O'er life's appalling deserts driven,
Will find a dwelling in the wild,
The dome yon starry vault of Heaven.

And when this awful conflict's o'er,
Near Vistula's bright murmuring wave,
Some gentle hand, on that sweet shore,
Will lay the greensward on my grave.

SELECTED POETRY.

[In the superstition of Devonshire are the Pixies, a race of beings invisibly small, and harmless or friendly to man. At a small distance from a village in that county, half way up a wood covered hill, is an excavation, called the Pixies' Parlour. The roots of old trees form its ceiling; and on its sides are innumerable cyphers, among which, the amusement of their childhood, the author discovered his own, and those of his brothers—at the foot of the hill flows the river Otter. To this place the author conducted a party of young ladies, during the Summer months of the year 1793; one of whom, of stature elegantly small, and of complexion colourless, yet clear, was proclaimed the Fairy Queen. On which occasion the following irregular Ode was written.]

Whom the untaught shepherds call
Pixies in their madrigal,
Fancy's children here we dwell:
Welcome, ladies, to our cell.
Here, the wren of softest note
Builds its nest, and warbles well;
Here the black-bird strains his throat:
Welcome, ladies, to our cell.

When fades the moon, all shadowy pale,
And scuds the cloud before the gale
Ere morn, with living gems bedight,
Streaks the east with purple light,
We sip the furze flowers fragrant dews,
Clad in robes of rain-bow hues,
Richer than the deepen'd bloom,
That glows on Summer's scented plume:

Or sport amid the rosy gleam,
Sooth'd by the distant tinkling team,
While lusty Labour, scouling Sorrow,
Bids the dame a glad good morrow,
Who joys the accustom'd road along,
And paces cheery to her cheering song.

But not our filmy pinion
We scorch amid the blaze of day,
When Noontide's fiery-tressed minion
Flashes the fervid ray.
Aye, from the sultry heat,
We to the cave retreat,
O'er canopied by huge roots intertwin'd
With wildest texture blacken'd o'er with age;
Round them their mantle green the ivies bind,
Beneath whose foliage pale,
Fann'd by the unfrequent gale,
We shield us from the tyrant's mid-day rage.

Thither, while the murmuring throng,
Of wild bees hum their drowsy song,
By Indolence and Fancy brought,
A youthful bard, 'unknown to fame,'
Woos the Queen of solemn thought,
And heaves the gentle misery of a sigh,
Gazing with tearful eye,
As round our sandy grot appear
Many a rudely sculptur'd name
To pensive Memory dear,
Weaving gay dreams of sunny tinctur'd hue,
We glance before his view;
O'er his hush'd soul our soothing witcheries shed,
And twine our fairy garlands round his head.

When Evening's dusky car,
Crown'd with her dewy star,
Steals o'er the fading sky in shadowy flight,
On leaves of Aspen trees,
We tremble to the breeze,
Veil'd from the grosser ken of mortal sight.
Or, haply, at the visionary hour,
Along our wild sequester'd walk
We listen to the enamour'd rustic's talk;
Heave with the heavings of the maiden's breast,
Where young ey'd Loves have built their turtle nest;
Or guide of soul subduing power,
The electric flash that from the melting eye
Darts the fond question, and the soft reply.

Or through the mystic ringlets of the vale
We flash our fairy feet in gamesome prank,
Or, silent sandal'd, pay our defter court,
Circling the spirit of the western gale,
Where, wearied with his flower caressing sport,
Supine he slumbers on a violet bank.
Then, with quaint music hymn the parting gleam
By lonely Otter's sleep-persuading stream,
Or where his wave, with loud unquiet song,
Dash'd o'er the rocky channel froths along;
Or where his silver waters smooth'd to rest,
The tall trees shadow sleeps upon his breast.

Hence! thou lingerer, Light!
Eve saddens into night.
Mother of wildly working dreams we view,
The sombre hours, that round thee stand,
With down-cast eyes, a duteous band,
Their dark robes dripping with the heavy dew:
Sorceress of the ebon throne!
Thy power the Pixies own,
When, round thy raven brow,
Heaven's lucent roses glow;
And clouds, in wat'ry colours drest,
Float in light drapery o'er thy sable vest;
What time the pale moon sheds a softer ray,
Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam;
For, 'mid the quiv'ring light, 'tis ours to play,
Aye, dancing to the cadence of the stream.

Welcome, ladies, to the cell,
Where the blameless Pixies dwell.
But thou, sweet nymph! proclaim'd our *Faery Queen*,
With what obeisance meet
Thy presence shall we greet?
For lo! attendant on thy steps are seen,
Graceful Ease, in artless stole,
And white rob'd Purity of soul,
With Honour's softer mein:
Mirth of the loosely flowing hair,
And meek ey'd Pity eloquently fair,
Whose tearful cheeks are lovely to the view,
As snow-drop, wet with dew.

Unboastful maid, though now the lily pale,
Transparent grace thy beauties meek;
Yet, ere again along the impurpling vale,
And Elfin haunted grove:
Young Zephyr his fresh flowers profusely throws,
We'll tinge with livelier hues thy cheek;
And, haply, from the nectar breathing Rose,
Extract a *blush for Love*.

SONG.

THE INVASION.

Come listen every Lord and Lady,
'Squire, gentleman, and statesman,
I've got a little song to sing,
About a *very great* man!
And if the name of Bonaparte
Should mingle in my story,
'Tis, with all due submission,
To his honour's worship's glory,
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

The kindness of this philanthropic
Gentleman extending,
From shore to shore, Colossus like,
Their grievances amending,
To Britain would reach, if he could,
From fancied ills to save ye;
But, tho' he likes us vastly well,
He does not like our Navy!
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

With Egypt once he fell in love,
Because it was the high road
To India, for himself and friends
To travel by a nigh road;
And, after making mighty fuss,
And fighting night and day there,
'Twas vastly ungenteel of us,
Who would not let him stay there,
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

A nobleman was sent to him,
For negotiation able,
And Bonaparte kindly set
Him down at his own table,
And in a story two hours long,
The Gentleman was heard in,
Whilst our Ambassador declar'd
He *could not get a word in*,
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

With belles and beaux the drawing-room
One morning it was quite full,
And Bona, like a *bantam cock*,
Came crowing rather spiteful;
He then began to huff and bluff,
To shew that war his trade is;
He scolded all the Englishmen,
And frighten'd all the ladies!!
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

From Malta next he took his text,
My Lord look'd rather blue on't,
For every trick the Consul had,
My Lord had one worth *two* on't:
Why, General, says he, 'sdeath and fire,
Unless you cease these capers,
They'll publish every word you say
In all the English papers.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

My Lord, says he, you needs must see
I pity British blindness,
And wish to open all your eyes,
Out of pure love and kindness;
To make a generous people free,
My legions shall, pell mell, come,
What think you then? Why, sir, I think,
They'd be more free than welcome.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

When I come o'er, I'll make all Britons
Live in perfect bliss, sir,
I'm sure they will receive me just
As kindly as the Swiss, sir.
The odds a hundred are to one
I fail, though Fortune's minion,
Says our ambassador to him,
I'm quite of your opinion.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

My Lord, says he, I'll take the field;
You'd better take the ocean,
My plans are deep—*Why yes, they'll reach*
The bottom I've a notion.
What would the English think to see
Me 'twixt Boulogne and Dover?
Why, General, they'd surely think
Your worship *half seas over*.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

Your Government I'll tame, says he,
Since war you are so fond on;
I've got my will in Paris here,
And wish the same in London:
I'll rule your great John Bull, says he,
I have him in the ring, sir.
Says John, I'll not be rul'd by you,
Nor any such a *thing*, sir.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

Then bring me flag invincible,
A Scot took it long ago, sir.
For now, I think, your ships I'll sink,
And never strike a blow, sir.
A clever man has found a plan,
A plan he's surely right in,
For if you beat the British fleet,
It must not be at *fighting!*
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

Quite frantic now, he vows revenge,
The moment that he's landed,
And proudly boasts we cannot hope
To fight him single handed.
What, single handed, we can do,
His troops shall know full well soon,
For him, he learnt it long ago,
From *single handed* NELSON.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

Now, since their minds are quite made up,
Let me, on this occasion,
Make one request to Neptune, should
They dream of an invasion:
To bring them safely out of port,
On gentle billows guide them,
To where a set of British boys
May anchor close beside them.
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED
FOR THE EDITOR,
BY HUGH MAXWELL,
NO. 25, NORTH SECOND-STREET.